

2019–20
CORPORATE PLAN

“To lead in the recognition and conservation of Victoria’s cultural heritage.”

— Heritage Council of Victoria

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Chair's foreword

As a peak Heritage body, we are proud to acknowledge Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, and to acknowledge the importance and significance of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

The Heritage Council of Victoria ('the Council') is an independent statutory body with the key function of identifying and protecting places and objects of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria. Our principal role is to ensure that Victoria's diverse cultural heritage is enjoyed, managed and protected for current and future generations. The *Heritage Act 2017* governs our work and Clause 9 of Schedule 1 provides that the Council must prepare a corporate plan for each financial year.

The Heritage Council Corporate Plan 2019–20 works in conjunction with our Strategic Plan 2016–2020, which gives a five-year overview of the Council's strategic activities and objectives, and our annual report, which reports on activities following the close of each financial year.

As a Council we recognise and acknowledge that cultural heritage is at the heart of many communities. Cultural heritage creates a sense of place, linked to our history, that enriches our lives. It provides both social and economic benefits. The Council continues to discharge its statutory responsibilities and strives to meet community expectations at a time of intense concern for the state's cultural heritage. The Council also seeks to undertake strategic work to improve heritage practice, ensure Victorians understand how heritage protection works, improve partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders and foster greater appreciation of how cultural heritage enriches the state. Our strategic activities and projects, along with the discharge of our statutory responsibilities under the *Heritage Act 2017*, are informed by this approach.

This corporate plan sets out the objectives, main undertakings and priority activities through which the Council intends to discharge its responsibilities and achieve its functions while also giving an account of estimated financial projections. We hope it informs you of the anticipated scope of the work of the Heritage Council of Victoria for 2019–20.



Professor Stuart Macintyre AO
Chair, Heritage Council of Victoria



1.0 Heritage Council of Victoria

The Council is an independent statutory authority established under the *Heritage Act 2017* (the Act) as the Victorian Government's primary decision-making body on the identification of places and objects of (non-Indigenous) cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria.

The Council lists places and objects of state-wide cultural heritage significance in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) and hears reviews and appeals, principally in relation to registration recommendations and permit decisions made by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria.

1.1 COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Council consists of 10 members and 10 alternate members who represent a broad cross-section of heritage specialists and the community. Members are appointed by the Governor-in-Council on the recommendation of the Minister for Planning. The following chart outlines all of the Council's membership categories for 2019–20 and current members.



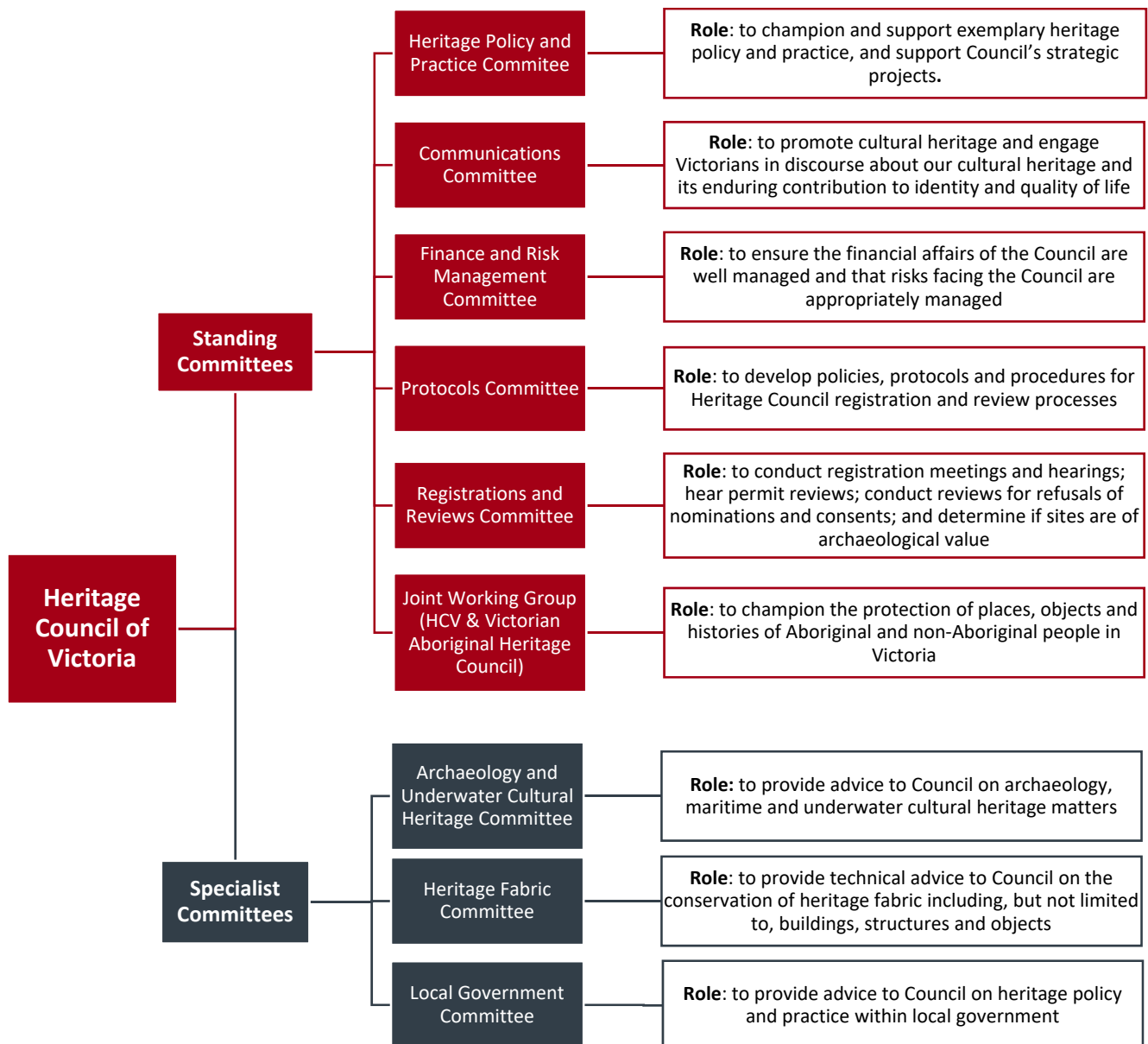
1.2 COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Under Part 2, Division 1, s.13 of the Act, the Council may establish committees to assist and advise it in fulfilling its statutory functions. There are two types of committees currently in operation:

Standing Committees – consisting of Council members only. Six standing committees have been constituted to ensure the effective operation of the Council, especially in relation to its legislative functions. The Standing Committees meet at least six times per year and, on Council's behalf, undertake some of its most critical and demanding work. This work includes: the conduct of hearings and reviews and the proper statutory administration of the Act; the management of the Council's finances; the oversight of strategic, educational and promotional activities; the development of heritage policy and practice; and the partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council.

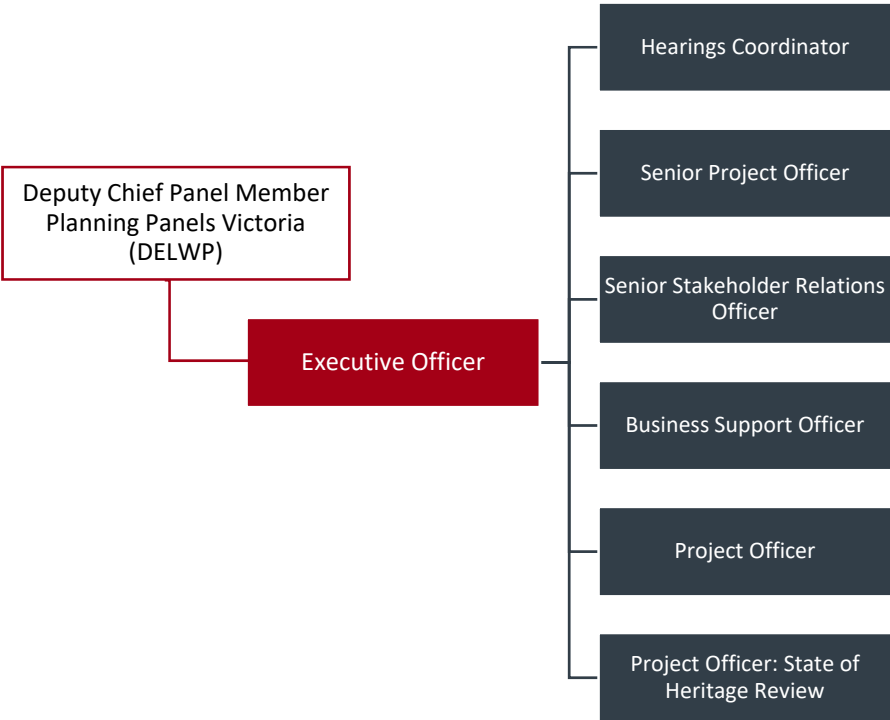
Specialist Committees – consisting of Council members and external subject-matter experts. Three specialist committees were constituted following the commencement of the Act to advise the Council on cultural heritage matters pertaining to specific subject areas. The Specialist Committees meet four times per year and provide advice to the Council as needed.

The following chart outlines the committees that will be operating in 2019–20 and their different roles:



1.3 SECRETARIAT

The Council does not employ any staff but is supported by a small Secretariat consisting of Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) employees. It is led by an Executive Officer who is the Council's Accountable Officer and is responsible for day-to-day matters. The Executive Officer reports to the Deputy Chief Panel Member, Planning Panels Victoria, DELWP.



02 Mission, vision and values

The Council uses the following strategic statements, taken from its Strategic Plan 2016–2020, to guide its work. The Council's Strategic Plan 2016–2020 and its stated mission, vision and values guide and inform the Council's objectives, priorities, main undertakings and activities as set out in the following sections of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018–19.

2.1 MISSION

To lead in the recognition and conservation of Victoria's cultural heritage.

2.2 VISION

Victorians connect with and value our diverse cultural heritage, acting as custodians for the stories of the past, present and future. Within this vision we aspire to have:

- Victorian communities, government, landowners and custodians understand the value of heritage and its contribution to enriched places and culture
- a world-class Victorian heritage system that protects and enhances heritage.

2.3 VALUES

Respect for heritage

We value Victoria's heritage as an asset to be enjoyed and appreciated by all as an expression of our history, places and culture.

Collaboration

We value the knowledge others bring to heritage conservation, and encourage the sharing of experience and information.

Innovation

We value the exploration of new approaches to ensure a more sustainable future for Victoria's cultural heritage.

Skilled practice

We value the skills and resources that enable best-practice heritage management across the state to ensure the continuation of our precious heritage resources.

03 Objectives, main undertakings and scope of activities

3.1 CURRENT OPERATING CONTEXT – OVERVIEW

As an independent statutory authority, the Council is very mindful of its obligations to the state, the community and Victoria's cultural heritage in all of its activities. The Council strives to meet community expectations in compliance, transparency and good governance. As part of its responsibilities, the Council must prepare and present an annual report, in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards and the *Financial Management Act 1994*. Performance reporting in relation to the objectives and priorities set out in the Heritage Council's corporate plan is now required to be included in its annual report. The Heritage Council's annual report is audited by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994*.

Many external factors that influence the Council's activities are changing. In particular, the pace and scale of development throughout Victoria, especially in Melbourne, has intensified concern for the protection of the state's cultural heritage assets. This operating environment, coupled with the changes to the *Heritage Act 2017* (the Act), is generating a measurable increase in the Council's statutory workload, resulting in changes to the Council's revenue pattern and a range of complex regulatory matters. Concern for the state's cultural heritage has also resulted in increased engagement by stakeholders in the Council's strategic and partnership work.

This evolving operating context requires the Council to examine ways of improving efficiency, while continuing to conduct its strategic work effectively and maintaining best-practice decision making. The continuous examination and analysis of the Council's operating context is consistent with the goals of the Council's Strategic Plan 2016–2020 and has resulted in the objectives set out below.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives listed below are related to the Council's priority activities and performance targets (see Section 5 of this corporate plan) and generally correspond to certain strategic goals listed in the Council's Strategic Plan 2016–2020. The Council's 2019–20 objectives are that:

- More Victorians understand the role that heritage plays in the life of our communities.
- The Council completes at least three widely used projects to champion and support exemplary heritage practice.
- The Council works effectively with managers of natural, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage to encourage a greater understanding of cultural heritage.
- The Council has capacity to provide robust and effective advice to the Minister.
- The Council has capacity to make and communicate high-quality decisions that are consistent and well-informed.

3.3 MAIN UNDERTAKINGS

The Council's identified objectives have been informed by the following main undertakings:

Provision of advice

One of the Council's key roles is to advise the Minister for Planning on the State of Victoria's cultural (non-Indigenous) heritage resources and any steps necessary to protect and conserve them.

The Council also has a role in advising and liaising with other bodies and individuals that have responsibilities in heritage protection and conservation in Victoria, including local government, community organisations and heritage owners/managers.

Determination of state-level significance and archaeological value

The Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) provides the state's highest level of legal protection for our cultural (non-Indigenous) heritage. The Council determines which places and objects are of state-level heritage significance and are included in the VHR.

The Council also determines if sites under 75 years of age have archaeological value and should therefore be included in the Heritage Inventory of Victorian archaeological sites.

Hearings and reviews

As prescribed by the Act, the Council conducts hearings or reviews in relation to requests for a review of: the Executive Director's recommendations for inclusion or non-inclusion in the VHR; determinations of permit applications; refusals of nominations for the VHR; and, consents for certain activities at archaeological sites.

Promotion of cultural heritage

The Council works to promote public understanding of Victoria's cultural heritage.

Undertaking research

The Council initiates and undertakes research to identify Victoria's heritage and assist in its conservation and interpretation. The Council may do this itself or in partnership with other government or community bodies.

Governance and compliance

As an independent statutory authority with its own financial management responsibilities, the Council has multiple governance and compliance obligations and reporting requirements. Please refer to the Heritage Council's Annual Report 2018–19 for further detailed information.

3.4 NATURE AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

The Council's Strategic Plan 2016–2020 sets out the strategic goals and activities that inform its objectives and main undertakings. The Council's core functions (as outlined in the Act, Part 2, Division 1, s.11) can be found at Appendix A. The Council's core functions and objectives will determine its activities and their scope, as set out in further detail in Section 5. The nature and scope of activities include:

- attending to core statutory functions (making determinations, conducting hearings and reviews) in relation to the VHR, the Heritage Inventory, nominations, permits and consents
- managing the Heritage Fund and publication of the corporate plan and annual report
- reporting annually on the state of Victoria's cultural heritage
- developing guidelines and research in relation to the protection and conservation of cultural heritage – including a review of the *Criteria and Threshold Guidelines*
- promoting public understanding of the state's cultural heritage – including by conducting public forums, industry workshops and developing strategic partnerships such as those with *Open House*, *Design Week* and the *Australian Heritage Festival*
- conducting internal reviews, training and analysis in relation to the Council's core functions.

04 Financial Projections

For 2019–22

4.1 ESTIMATES OF 2019-22 REVENUE, EXPENDITURE AND OVERALL FINANCIAL POSITION FOR THE HERITAGE FUND, MANAGED BY THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO s.11(1)(o) AND PART 11 OF THE ACT

	Budget			
	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
	\$ '000	\$ '000	\$ '000	\$ '000
Revenue				
DELWP contribution	250	250	250	250
Fees Revenue	1,440	1,600	1,500	1,500
CBS Interest	30	40	40	40
Total	1,720	1,890	1,790	1,790
Expenditure				
Admin and Remuneration	1,175	1,254	1,317	1,383
Communications	100	100	100	100
Strategic Projects	170	200	100	100
Partnership Projects	-	60	30	30
Grant to Heritage Victoria	125	300	243	177
Legacy Grants and Studies	105	167	-	-
Projects	45	49	-	-
Total	1,720	2,130	1,790	1,790
Overall Position	0	- 240	0	0

HCV	Budget	Forecast		
	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
	\$ '000	\$ '000	\$ '000	\$ '000
Revenue	1,720	1,890	1,790	1,790
Expenditure	1,720	2,130	1,790	1,790
Overall Position	0	- 240	0	0

Heritage Council of Victoria has access to funds of \$2.514 million, related to investments with Westpac

Notes on 2019-20 projected budget deficit

- The projected \$240,000 budget deficit in 2019–20 is due mainly to legacy grants and projects which were transferred to the Council but are managed through Heritage Victoria. The Council and Heritage Victoria have been working towards acquitting these funds and anticipate that this will be complete by the end of 2019–20.
- The Heritage Fund holds investments with Westpac of \$2.5 million which can be drawn down as required.

Notes on the Council's Financial Projections 2019–22

- As anticipated, the commencement of the Act has resulted in an increase in the amount of fee revenue being paid into the Heritage Fund.

- While the fee revenue has increased so too has the Council's operating expenditure, with an increase in both the number and complexity of regulatory activities.
- The Council has continued to adopt a 'balanced-budget' approach to the Heritage Fund budget to reflect the prevailing increase in fee revenue. This approach includes increases in staffing expenditure and increased costs associated with the administration of the Act.
- The majority of Heritage Fund revenue is subject to changes in development activity and economic conditions. As such, the Council considers that a DELWP operating grant is necessary to cover administrative costs.
- The Council has previously been constrained in its capacity to undertake many of its statutory functions, such as promoting public understanding of the State's cultural heritage (s.11[1][c]). The current projected increase in revenue allows the Council to plan to attend to some of its non-regulatory functions.

05 Objectives, priority activities and performance targets

For 2019–20

The Council's objectives listed below include those which generally correspond to certain strategic goals listed in the Council's Strategic Plan 2016–2020.

Objective	2019–20 Priority Activities	Performance Targets
More Victorians understand the role that heritage plays in the life of our communities.	- Support the Council to speak on important heritage issues, including at an increased range of events in Victoria. - Run new and promote existing programs that improve community understanding of and connection to cultural heritage. - Work with the Minister, Heritage Victoria, National Trust, local government, community heritage organisations and other stakeholders to communicate and clarify responsibilities and processes.	- Members participate in five public events presenting on cultural heritage and the work of the Council. - Review current levels of communication with heritage owners and others. Recommend options for future engagement and develop a plan for doing this including resources and timing. - An increase in measurable social media activity in 2019–20, including all publicly advertised events and high-profile decisions. - Complete the State of Heritage Review: Local Heritage.
The Council completes at least three widely used projects to champion and support exemplary heritage practice.	- Develop resources for different stakeholders to improve their awareness of best-practice cultural heritage. - Investigate ways to support owners and custodians, including technical advice and support.	- Progress the joint project presented to Heritage Chairs and Officials Australia and New Zealand. - Expansion of the Open House partnership in 2019. - Completion of at least one project that supports exemplary heritage practice.
The Council works effectively with managers of natural, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage to encourage a greater understanding of cultural heritage.	Work with agencies and custodians responsible for natural, Aboriginal and non-Indigenous cultural heritage to improve collaboration and understanding of cultural heritage.	Engage with and provide feedback on the development of a new Marine and Coastal Policy to improve integration of heritage.
The Council has capacity to provide robust and effective advice to the Minister.	Undertake regular gap analysis to ensure the Council is well equipped with the training and skills required to fulfil our role.	- Undertake at least one project which will deliver advice to the Minister. - Two strategic training sessions delivered for the Council during 2019–20.
The Council has capacity to make and communicate high-quality decisions that are consistent and well informed.	- Examine ways to improve efficiency and increase resources to the Council, including advocacy for increased staff and planning for project funds. - Perform our statutory functions efficiently and effectively and review processes to ensure best-practice decision making and improved procedures for hearings. - Provide strategic training for members to ensure best-practice hearings practices and protocols.	- HC registration decisions released within statutory timeframes – 100%. - Permit review decisions released within statutory timeframes – 100%. - Ongoing review and update of policies and procedures by the Protocols Committee. - Undertake a budgetary and operational analysis to ensure adequate staff to support statutory functions. - Conduct at least one strategic (hearings) training session in 2019–20. - Develop the Heritage Council Strategic Plan 2021–25.

05 Appendix A

The Heritage Council's core functions

The Council has the following statutory functions, as set out in Part 2, Division 1, s.11, of the *Heritage Act 2017*.

- to advise the Minister on the Status of the state's cultural heritage resources and on any steps necessary to protect and conserve them
- to make and publish guidelines in relation to the conservation of cultural heritage
- to promote public understanding of the state's cultural heritage and develop and conduct community information and education programs
- to advise government departments and agencies and municipal councils on matters relating to the protection and conservation of places and objects of cultural heritage significance
- to liaise with other bodies responsible for matters relating to the protection, conservation, management and promotion of Victoria's cultural heritage
- to initiate and undertake programs of research related to the identification, conservation or interpretation of Victoria's cultural heritage
- to include places or objects in the Heritage Register
- to remove places or objects from the Heritage Register, or to amend the registration of a place or object
- to remove sites from the Heritage Inventory
- to conduct reviews of decisions of the Executive Director in relation to nominations, permits and consents
- to develop, revise and publish the assessment criteria to be used in considering the cultural heritage significance of places and objects and determining whether those places or objects should or should not be included in the Heritage Register
- to adopt, and forward to the Minister, World Heritage Strategy Plans and amendments to World Heritage Strategy Plans
- to determine criteria for assessing whether a place has archaeological value
- to advise the Minister administering the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, on proposed amendments to planning schemes which may affect the protection or conservation of cultural heritage
- to manage the Heritage Fund
- to perform any other functions conferred on the Heritage Council under this Act or any other Act.

